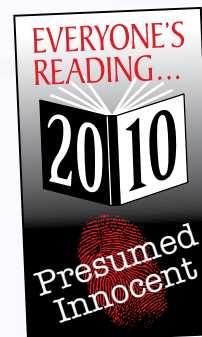


## Discussion Questions for *Presumed Innocent*

1. The story begins with Carolyn Polhemus's funeral. How does Turow use this scene to set up the competing agendas of the book?
2. How does Rusty's obsession with Carolyn affect the way you feel about him, first as the investigator, then the prime suspect? What dual role does this obsession play?
3. Judge Larren Lyttle has a long history with Raymond Horgan, the chief prosecutor who needs a conviction to help get re-elected. How does this raise the stakes in the criminal trial?
4. What is the role of the Night Saints case? Is it ultimately important to the story?
5. The story interweaves a flashback of Rusty's affair with Carolyn, the present tense investigation of her murder investigation and trial, and intimate family scenes with Rusty, his wife, Barbara and his son, Nat. Why are these family scenes so important? Do you view them differently as you are reading them and then after the conclusion?
6. Rusty Sabich is not indicted or charged with a crime until a third of the way into the story. Why does Turow wait so long? Why is it important that Sabich is not a suspect in the first third of the story?
7. Rusty reveals a difficult relationship with his own father and that he comes from a dysfunctional family. What does that background make you think about Rusty? And why does the author introduce that background at that moment in the story?
8. When Raymond Horgan testifies against Rusty Sabich, what does it tell you about their relationship? About Rusty's involvement in the case as an investigator before he was charged with murder? Does it affect the way you view Rusty's guilt or innocence?
9. Defense attorney Sandy Stern suggests that the case against Rusty Sabich has been manufactured by the prosecutor's office because of personal grudges. How does this turn out to be a kind of clue? How does Stern pursue this line of questioning later with the police pathologist? How is it pivotal both in the trial and in the ultimate conclusion?
10. Rusty knows an essential piece of information that is not revealed until after the trial. Why do you think Turow did this?



[www.everyonesreading.info](http://www.everyonesreading.info)

## Participating Libraries

Everyone's Reading *Presumed Innocent* is sponsored by the following Metro Net Consortium libraries:

**Baldwin Public Library**  
(248) 647-1700  
[www.baldwinlib.org](http://www.baldwinlib.org)

**Bloomfield Township Public Library**  
(248) 642-5800  
[www.btpl.org](http://www.btpl.org)

**Canton Public Library**  
(734) 397-0999  
[www.cantonpl.org](http://www.cantonpl.org)

**Farlington Community Library**  
(248) 553-0300  
[www.farmlib.org](http://www.farmlib.org)

In addition, the following public libraries are participating in Everyone's Reading:

**Auburn Hills Public Library**  
(248) 364-6706  
[www.auburn-hills.lib.mi.us](http://www.auburn-hills.lib.mi.us)

**Berkley Public Library**  
(248) 658-3440  
[www.berkley.lib.mi.us](http://www.berkley.lib.mi.us)

**Dearborn Public Library**  
(313) 943-2330  
[www.dearbornlibrary.org](http://www.dearbornlibrary.org)

**Detroit Public Library**  
(313) 833-1000  
[www.detroitpubliclibrary.org](http://www.detroitpubliclibrary.org)

**Oak Park Public Library**  
(248) 691-7480  
[www.ci.oak-park.mi.us/Library](http://www.ci.oak-park.mi.us/Library)

**Rochester Hills Public Library**  
(248) 650-7130  
[www.rhpl.org](http://www.rhpl.org)

**Southfield Public Library**  
(248) 796-4200  
[www.southfieldlibrary.org](http://www.southfieldlibrary.org)

**West Bloomfield Township Public Library**  
(248) 682-2120  
[www.westbloomfieldlibrary.org](http://www.westbloomfieldlibrary.org)

**Plymouth District Library**  
(734) 453-0750  
[plymouthlibrary.org](http://plymouthlibrary.org)

**Royal Oak Public Library**  
(248) 246-3700  
[www.ropl.org](http://www.ropl.org)

**Troy Public Library**  
(248) 524-3538  
[troylibrary.info](http://troylibrary.info)

**Public Library of Westland**  
(734) 326-6123  
[westlandlibrary.org](http://westlandlibrary.org)

EVERYONE'S READING...  
**Presumed Innocent**  
February 15 — April 28, 2010

READER'S GUIDE



## What is **Everyone's Reading**?

Everyone's Reading is a community wide reading program sponsored by Metro Detroit public libraries in Oakland and Wayne counties. Now in its ninth year, Everyone's Reading promotes community dialogue through the shared experience of reading and discussing the same book. Additional programming, related to issues and topics in the selected book, is offered to enhance the reading experience.

**This year's Everyone's Reading selection is *Presumed Innocent* by Scott Turow.**

**Previous Everyone's Reading Selections:**

**2009**

*Finding My Voice* by Diane Rehm

**2008**

*The Beekeeper's Apprentice* by Laurie R. King

**2007**

*Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age* by Kevin Boyle

**2006**

*Shadow Divers: The True Adventure of Two Americans Who Risked Everything to Solve one of the Last Mysteries of World War II* by Robert Kurson

**2005**

Author Elizabeth McCracken, featuring *Here's Your Hat*, *What's Your Hurry*; *The Giant's House*; and *Niagara Falls All Over Again*

**2004**

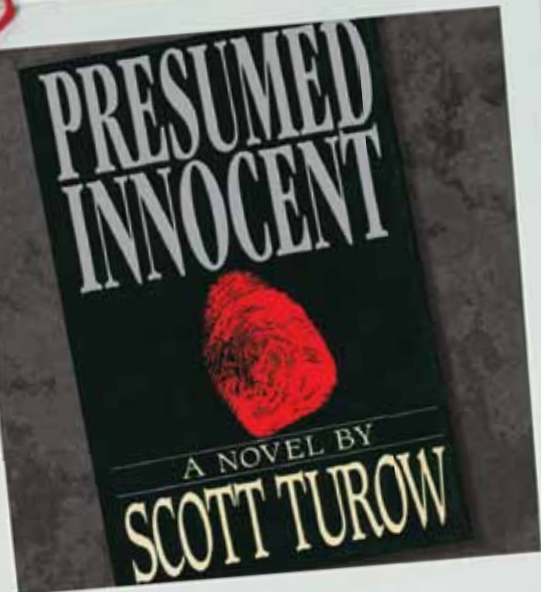
*Saul and Patsy* by Charles Baxter

**2003**

*A Lesson Before Dying* by Ernest J. Gaines

**2002**

*Pay It Forward* by Catherine Ryan Hyde



*This year's selection*

## Why Read ***Presumed Innocent***?

With the publication of *Presumed Innocent* in 1987, Scott Turow ushered in the age of the legal thriller. Despite many other skilled writers who followed—including John Grisham, Richard North Patterson, Lisa Scottoline and John Lescroart—Turow's work remains unique: critically acclaimed psychological studies that appeal to a wide audience. Character rather than courtroom pyrotechnics dominates his elegantly written novels, which also raise important questions of morality, truth and justice. After earning his undergraduate degree, Turow graduated from the Creative Writing Center at Stanford and then taught there for several years. He graduated with honors from Harvard Law School in 1978. Turow's credentials are unique among his peers.

## How to **Get Involved**

Check out *Presumed Innocent* from a participating library (see a list on the back panel). Discuss the book and participate in the various programs. Use this guide to lead your own book discussion group or attend one of the special Everyone's Reading events listed in the program brochure and at [www.everyonesreading.info](http://www.everyonesreading.info).

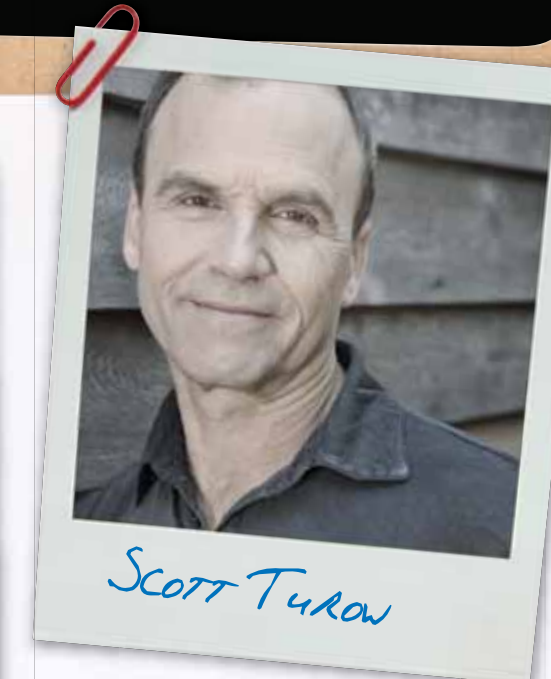
## About the Author

Scott Turow is a practicing attorney and the author of seven best-selling novels, beginning with *Presumed Innocent*. As an attorney, both for the U.S. Attorney's office in Chicago and in private practice, Turow has had intimate experiences with the criminal justice system and capital punishment. Turow served on the Illinois Commission on Capital Punishment. He wrote about his journey from a self-described "death penalty agnostic" to becoming actively opposed to the death penalty in *Ultimate Punishment: A Lawyer's Reflections on Dealing with the Death Penalty*.

Turow is a partner at Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal in Chicago and concentrates on white collar criminal defense. He devotes significant time to pro bono work, including a 1995 case that resulted in the release of Alejandro Hernandez who had spent twelve years in prison, including five on death row, for a murder he did not commit.

Wrongful conviction, a theme in *Presumed Innocent*, is a focus of the Innocence Project, a national litigation and public policy organization. Founded in 1992, the Innocence Project works to exonerate wrongfully convicted people through DNA testing and to reform the justice system. To date, 245 people in the U.S. have been exonerated by DNA testing, including 17 who served time on death row. Almost every state has an Innocence Project office, including Michigan's Thomas M. Cooley Innocence Project in Lansing and the Michigan Innocence Clinic in Ann Arbor. For more information about the Innocence Project and individual cases, go to [www.innocenceproject.org](http://www.innocenceproject.org) or attend one of the Everyone's Reading programs about the Innocence Project.

Turow was born in Chicago in 1949 and lives in a Chicago suburb.



"I want to thank everybody who's participating in the 2010 Everyone's Reading event. *Presumed Innocent* was the first novel I published (although hardly the first one I wrote). Its success shocked me and permanently altered my life. But the book arose from much of the turmoil I felt as a young lawyer, trying to make sense of a life so divided by my loyalty to my young family and a prosecutor's consuming duty to do right. I have been living with the novel again for much of the last five years, since I have just finished a sequel, *Innocent*, about Rusty Sabich twenty-one years later. I imagine I'll talk a bit about the new book and the old one when I get to Michigan."

— Scott Turow

## Meet the Author

You are invited to hear Scott Turow speak about his life and experience writing *Presumed Innocent*. Copies of the book will be available for purchase and signing, courtesy of the Book Beat bookstore.

Due to popular demand, a ticket will be required for all author appearances. Tickets are free but limited. Contact your local participating library for more information and ticket availability.

**Wednesday, April 14 at 7 PM**  
**The Village Theater at Cherry Hill**  
 50400 Cherry Hill Rd.  
 Canton

**Thursday, April 15 at 4 PM**  
**Baldwin Public Library**  
 Open only to Baldwin Public Library cardholders.

**Thursday, April 15 at 7 PM**  
**Millennium Centre**  
 15600 J.L. Hudson Drive  
 Southfield